Port Phillip Prison is the largest maximum security prison in Victoria. The Prison is operated by G4S under contract to the Department of Justice. The prison commenced operations in 1997 with an original design capacity of 600 prisoners.

It was the third of the privately operated prisons to open in Victoria. It is located on the western outskirts of the Melbourne Metropolitan area, 20km from the city centre in the Western Metropolitan region.

Port Phillip Prison has a critical multi-purpose role at the front end of the prison system. It is responsible for accommodating a range of specialist prisoner groups including those who are:

- protection and mainstream
- medically unwell
- psychiatrically unwell (sub-acute)
- under a management regime
- cognitively impaired
- sentenced youth

Port Phillip Prison is a transit location, providing a secondary reception role and intermediate placement for the prison system. It also operates as a transport hub for male prisoners who are required to return from regional prisons for reasons such as reclassification, court and medical treatment.

The Prison currently accommodates 989 prisoners (prior to the recent expansion) and employs 440 staff. The majority are custodial staff, over a third of which are female. It facilitates 25,000 prisoner movements per annum.

There are presently 19 prisoner accommodation units, including the statewide management unit, two interim management units, on-site medical facility, psycho social unit, dedicated young adults unit - Penhyn, Marlborough Unit for cognitively - impaired prisoners, and four protection units.

Health Services

Health services at PPP are delivered by St Vincent’s Correctional Health Service (StVCH) under a subcontracting arrangement with G4S. As well as providing primary care to PPP prisoners, the G4S subcontract with StVCH provides all secondary and tertiary care (at St Augustine’s unit, St Vincent’s Hospital) to male prisoners in Victoria.

St John’s is a 20 bed ward located at Port Phillip Prison designed to provide 24/7 health care for prisoners with high healthcare needs.

St Thomas’s unit provides access to specialist outpatient services, including clinics provided by attending specialists from St Vincent’s Hospital.

St Paul’s is a psycho-social unit at Port Phillip Prison with a capacity to accommodate up to 30 prisoners with psychiatric needs, and incorporates an inpatient psychosocial rehabilitation unit.

Educational Centre

The flexible learning centre offers courses delivered by Kangan TAFE. Courses include literacy and numeracy, information technology, hospitality, horticulture, art, textiles, laundry, forklift operation, occupational health and safety, industrial cleaning, full time education and access to distance learning. Koori Art - the speciality of indigenous Australians who account for between six and seven percent of the inmates - is also on the curriculum.

Expansion for the Future

Port Phillip is currently undergoing further expansion works, which include a new prisoner accommodation unit providing an additional 118 beds, dedicated central operations centre and expansion of the Admissions building, four additional factories and extension of the car park.
There are will be ten factories on site providing prisoner employment at the conclusion of the current expansion.

The State made $32.5M of funding available for a development project at Port Phillip Prison to increase prisoner accommodation capacity and provide additional buildings for support services required to effectively manage the prison operations for a total of 1107 maximum security prisoners.

Construction on this expansion project commenced in December 2012 and provided many employment opportunities during the construction period with up to 150 sub-contractors on site during the peak construction phase.

The additional operational requirements to manage the increased prisoner population has provided approx. 60 full and part-time employment opportunities for management, custodial guards, health and training professionals.

The projects works were undertaken by G4S Correctional Services Australia and their nominated sub-contractors, Cox Architects and Ireland Brown Constructions.

A Unit Called Matilda

The centrepiece of the expansion project is the new accommodation unit, named ‘Matilda’, which consists of an 118 bed cell block.

The additional accommodation is being provided to meet the increasing demand/capacity pressures of prisoner numbers throughout the Victorian prison system.

These facilities will maintain a safe and humane environment where maximum security prisoners can maintain ties with their family and the community whilst they engage in positive pre-release and rehabilitation activities.

By increasing the total prisoner population to 1107 the prison required additional infrastructure to support the effective day-to-day operations, provide education and skills training opportunities for the prisoners and maintain security management processes.

As such, four other buildings were included in the scope of work for this development project.

- Two Industries and educations buildings to provide training, education and work skills to the increased prisoner population.
- A Central Movement Control building located in the centre of the prison to assist with movement control, medical services and drug therapy programs

The delivery of the additional accommodation by June 2014 was critical for the State to meet expected demand/capacity pressures. The Unit will begin housing prisoners on June 23, 2014.

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